



# Architectural Review Board Report

Architectural Review Board Meeting: October 17, 2011

Agenda Item: 8.7

To: Architectural Review Board

From: Steve Traeger, Principal Urban Designer  
Laura Beck, ARB Liaison

Subject: ARB 11-354 to approve the design, colors, and materials for the new Pico Branch Library located within Virginia Avenue Park.

Address: 2200 Virginia Avenue  
Applicant: City of Santa Monica

## Recommended Action

It is recommended that the Architectural Review Board approve ARB application 11-354 based upon the findings and subject to the conditions contained within this report.

## Executive Summary

The City of Santa Monica proposes to construct a new 8,690 SF single-story branch library located within Virginia Avenue Park. The library would consist of educational and cultural programming, adult and children collections, popular materials, children's area, public computers, reading areas, group study rooms, and customer support services. The project would provide improvements such as outdoor shading and leisurely areas, an amphitheater for small gatherings, and an additional community room that would further enhance park amenities for visitors. The project would be developed according to LEED Certification Standards and seeks to achieve a silver rating. Staff supports the overall design and use of quality materials, and therefore recommends approval of the proposed library based upon the findings and conditions contained within the report.

## Background

11DR-002, 11CUP-007,  
11VAR-011:

On October 11, 2011, City Council approved a Development Review Permit, Conditional Use Permit, and Parking Variance for the proposed branch library.

## Project / Site Information

The following table provides a brief summary of project data:

Zoning District / Design Guidelines:	DP (Designated Park District)
Parcel Area (SF):	413,820 SF, 9.5 acres
Parcel Dimensions:	Irregular Shaped Lot
Existing On-Site Improvements:	Patio Building (3,612 SF), Thelma Terry Building (5,315 SF), Park Center (7,807 SF), Teen Center (6,086 SF)

Mature Vegetation	Existing.
Historic Resource	Existing buildings are not listed on the Historic Resources Inventory
CEQA	Exempt pursuant to Section 15061 (b)(3)
Adjacent Zoning & Use:	North: R2/Multi-Family Residential East: C4/Commercial, R2/Multi-Family Residential South: C4/Commercial West: C2/Commercial, R2/Multi-Family Residential
Landscape Plans	Landscaping plans will not be reviewed under this application.
Transportation	No proposed changes to the existing parking layout.

Virginia Avenue Park is located on the northwest corner of Cloverfield and Pico Boulevards within the Designated Park District. The surrounding land uses consist of retail commercial at the east and west perimeters of the park and across the street along the south side of Pico Boulevard. Both multi-family and single-family residential uses are located along the Cloverfield Boulevard, Virginia Avenue, and 21<sup>st</sup> Street perimeters. The project will have both pedestrian and vehicle entrances from each street frontage.

## Analysis

### *Building Siting*

The library facility is centrally located adjacent to the Thelma Terry Community Center in an area of the park that is currently underutilized. The proposed building location would have the least amount of impact to the existing park open space and on the current operations of the Farmers Market held on Saturdays. As situated, the library building would enhance the existing park venues, including the Thelma Terry Community Center, the Park Center Building, and the Farmers Market, and is oriented to provide a visual focal point as viewed from Pico Boulevard. Furthermore, locating the library to the center of the park would promote pedestrian walkability of the overall site, and is consistent with the concept of a neighborhood serving branch library.

### *Project Design*

The proposed library is contemporary in architectural style, and consists of smooth troweled stucco, and dimpled and perforated metal panels. The building is pedestrian-oriented and includes expansive clear glazing panels along the south, east, and west walls that provide natural daylight and a visual connection to the park. The strong visual connections between the interior and exterior spaces enhance the relationship of the library use with the park. Staff suggests the applicant consider providing operable glazing panels to improve this relation and provide additional cooling and cross ventilation for the building. In addition, a skylight would provide the interior space with adequate indirect sunlight. The building includes a dynamic folded roof design with large projecting roof overhangs providing shaded areas for library and park visitors.



The south building elevation would be shaded with a fabric canopy structure, providing additional shading essential for Farmers Market patrons. In efforts to achieve LEED Silver, the exterior shading elements help to minimize heat penetration into the building, and allow for clear glazing to maximize park views and natural light into the library. In addition to these sun-shading elements, a series of landscape improvements would further activate the areas surrounding the library facility.

The landscape design includes improvements such as new concrete paving, raised planters and seat walls for visitors adjacent to the building. An amphitheater with terraced steps is designed adjacent to the south elevation of the community room that can accommodate small performances and seating for approximately 15 people. New trees would be planted around the facility that would provide additional shading for the area. Although the landscaping and irrigation plans are subject to Board review, a tentative hardscape and landscape plan is included in the plans to assist with the Board's consideration of the project building design.

In efforts to preserve park space to the east, the 818 square foot community room is located in a separate building across the 20'-6" fire access lane/pedestrian path. Although detached from the primary building, the two structures are connected at the roofline with a wood/steel trellis creating a breezeway for pedestrians. This design reinforces this existing pedestrian path that links Pico Boulevard with Virginia Avenue. Separating the community room from the primary building allows the space to function independently from library operations, including access outside of library hours. The community room can accommodate groups of approximately 50 persons, and has operable sliding doors that connect the interior space with the exterior amphitheater.

An exterior lighting plan indicates four types of exterior lighting proposed for the project. Covered trellis canopy areas along the east building elevation and the pedestrian breezeway would include florescent strip lighting fixtures, while the fabric canopy area along the south elevation would include pole-mounted, down-lit LED flood lights. Portions of the building would be designed with small recessed LED lights at exterior soffits. Finally, an additional light pole would be added to the landscaped area west of the community room that would match existing light poles in the area.

The architectural design, proportions, scale, and materials of the proposed library buildings are consistent with the existing park buildings. The folded roof design was influenced by the roof forms on the existing Park Center and Patio building, providing design continuity with the existing structures. Moreover, the single-story library buildings would be consistent and compatible with the low-scale buildings on-site. As mentioned, the building's expansive clear glazing panels provide a strong visual connection between the park and library, further enhancing site and use compatibility. Staff supports the overall design and use of quality materials, and therefore recommends approval of the proposed library based upon the findings and conditions contained within the report.

Impact on Historic Resources

The subject property is not listed on the City’s Historic Resources Inventory.

**Landscape Plans**

Board review of landscape plans is not required for projects within the DP (Designated Park) District.

**CEQA Status**

The project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15061 (b)(3) in that it can be seen with certainty that the proposed project does not have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment in that the project involves the review of design-related issues associated with the proposed structure(s) in terms of general architectural design, proposed materials, colors, mechanical screening and/or landscape plans.

**Code Compliance**

This application has been preliminarily reviewed for compliance with the base district’s development standards which address aspects of the plan that could result in significant changes to the project’s design. A complete code-compliance review will not occur until the application is submitted for plan check. It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that the plans comply fully with all applicable provisions of the Municipal Code. The applicant has been notified of any significant non-compliant aspects of their plans, and a condition has been added requiring full compliance with all applicable regulations prior to the issuance of a building permit. Any significant changes to the design subsequent to any ARB approval will require Board approval.

Building Design

DESIGN ELEMENTS	PROPOSED EXTERIOR MATERIAL, FINISH AND COLOR
Façade	Stucco, smooth trowel (white) Dimpled metal panel, powder coated (grey) Perforated metal panel, powder coated (grey)
Windows	Extruded aluminum frame, clear anodized Solar ban 60 glazing, clear insulated glazing
Doors	Extruded aluminum frame, clear anodized Full light-extruded aluminum door, clear anodized Hollow metal door + frame, painted (match wall color)
Roof	“Sarnafil” vinyl thermoplastic, membrane roof (light grey) “Sarnafil” vinyl thermoplastic, membrane roof (white @ mechanical roof)
Roof-Mounted Mechanical Screening	Roof and parapet would screen roof-mounted mechanical equipment.



Refuse Screening	No proposed change to existing refuse and recycling area.
Balcony Guardrails	"Xtend metal mesh, stainless steel
Lighting	See exterior lighting plan.
Canopy/Awning/ Trellis	Steel, galvanized. Fabric (green)

**FINDINGS:**

- A. The plan for the proposed building or structure is expressive of good taste, good design, and in general contributes to the image of Santa Monica as a place of beauty, creativity and individuality in that the proposed library is contemporary in architectural style, is pedestrian-oriented, and includes expansive clear glazing panels along the south, east, and west walls that provide natural daylight and a visual connection to the park. The building includes a dynamic folded roof design with large projecting roof overhangs providing shaded areas for library and park visitors. The south building elevation would be shaded with a fabric canopy structure, providing additional shading essential for Farmers Market patrons. In addition to these sun-shading elements, a series of landscape improvements would further activate the areas surrounding the library facility. An amphitheater with terraced steps is designed adjacent to the south elevation of the community room that can accommodate small performances and seating for approximately 15 people, providing creativity site design. The proposed lighting plan would provide visitors with a sense of space and direction during evening hours, and would help display the leisurely areas surrounding the library building.
- B. The proposed building or structure is not of inferior quality such as to cause the nature of the local neighborhood or environment to materially depreciate in appearance and value in that high quality material as detailed in the application submittal and as presented to the Architectural Review Board will be used.
- C. The proposed design of the building or structure is compatible with developments on land in the general area in that the architectural design, proportions, scale, and materials of the proposed library buildings are consistent with the existing park buildings. The folded roof design was influenced by the roof designs found on the existing Park Center and Patio building on-site, providing a design compatibility with the existing structures. Furthermore, the building's expansive clear glazing panels would provide a strong visual connection between the library and park. The project would provide additional shading and leisurely areas, further enhancing the enjoyment of the park for visitors. The building's design establishes a relationship between the library use and park settings that would further enhance services for the neighborhood.
- D. The proposed development conforms to the effective guidelines and standards adopted pursuant to Chapter 9.32 – *Architectural Review Board*, and all other applicable ordinances insofar as the location and appearance of the buildings

and structures are involved. Specifically, the location and appearance of the buildings and structures comply with required findings set forth in Chapter 9.32, as documented by the Architectural Review Board, and as conditioned, the plans will fully comply with all applicable regulations prior to the issuance of a building permit.

**CONDITIONS:**

1. This approval shall expire when the administrative or discretionary entitlements, not including any Subdivision Map approvals, previously granted for the project have lapsed. If no such entitlements have been granted, this approval shall expire eighteen (18) months from its effective date, unless appealed.
2. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, the applicant shall demonstrate that the plans comply with all applicable provisions of the Zoning Ordinance. Significant changes to a project's design shall require review and approval of the Architectural Review Board. Minor changes may be approved administratively pursuant to all applicable guidelines.

The Architectural Review Board's approval, conditions of approval, or denial of this application may be appealed to the Planning Commission if the appeal is filed with the Zoning Administrator within ten consecutive days following the date of the Architectural Review Board's determination in the manner provided in Chapter 9.32, Section 9.32.160.

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**Attachments**

- A. Applicant's Submittal Material

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